

News-Herald 7-8-11

Lake County budget likely to decline in 2012

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Lake County commissioners approved a preliminary version of the 2012 tax budget Thursday that means they most likely will spend less money than planned for 2011.

Commissioners are required by state law to approve a final permanent budget for 2012 by March 31, so there will likely be many revisions between now and then.

Approval of the preliminary ver-

sion now is required by Ohio Revised Code.

Part of that process involves conducting a public hearing, which commissioners did June 7.

County officials won't know the exact amount of projected revenue until a certificate of resources is issued by the county Auditor's Office.

For now, the county projects a budget for 2012 with expenditures and revenues of about \$52 million.

Part of the reason for a smaller budget is commissioners expect to receive no state reimbursements. This year, the county is estimated to receive \$1.626 million.

Also the commissioners plan to receive \$1.22 million in 2012 from

the state Local Government Fund, down from an estimate of \$1.7 million for 2011.

In March, commissioners approved a \$54.83 million permanent general fund budget for 2011.

"The preliminary numbers for next year show that the revenues for next year is about \$3 million less than what we anticipated for this year," Commissioner Robert E. Aufuldish said.

The current year-to-date estimate for 2011 shows the county projects

to take in more than \$55.09 million and spend about \$54.85 million.

That would leave the county with a cash balance of about \$3.33 million at the end of the year after beginning with a \$3.08 million carryover.

Commissioners realize there will be much work to do before a permanent general fund budget is approved for 2012.

"Again, this is just the process," Commissioner Raymond E. Sines said. "It's preliminary numbers, that's all."